

SECRET

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

NFAC-5180-79
26 September 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, National Foreign Assessment Center
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM : National Intelligence Officer for Latin America

SUBJECT : Thoughts on the NIO Structure

I herein respond to your invitations to spell out my thoughts on the NIO structure. I am an observer of only one corner of the elephant. Thus, I spend as much space spelling out assumptions on the nature of the problem as I do in offering recommendations. The recommendations will not be cost effective if the assumptions overstate or otherwise misrepresent the problem.

Assumptions

1. There is a serious need for both (a) more and better inter-agency papers and (b) more and better NFAC macroanalytical assessments. As US foreign policy problems become more complex, more and better intelligence papers are needed that (a) examine the frameworks in which policy is defined and executed, (b) cut across regions and disciplines, (c) project over the horizon.
2. The Agency will have to address these needs with an essentially fixed number of analysts and supergrades. Productivity will grow only slowly because of bureaucratic inertia in replacing or upgrading marginal producers.
3. There can be no diminution in the attention to quick-response work, especially when the DCI initiates, is directly tasked, or otherwise feels personally responsible (e.g., the PDB).
4. Leaders of existing NFAC offices will be critical of changes that reduce either the size of or their control over present cadres.

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5. Analysts in existing offices will hesitate to commit their careers to untested new formations, and to pay the learning costs for unfamiliar art forms, especially in light of the critical attitude of their office chiefs and the continuing high priority of quick-response work.

6. It will take at least a year for any new formation to be staffed and trained to a level of competency at which its value will be widely recognized.

7. The institution of orderly and forcefully articulated procedures is urgently needed. Nonetheless, during this period of vulnerability, rigid rules as to who does what and forced consistency of organization for addressing varied problems will prove counter-productive.

8. The DCI cannot dispense with a large complement of NIOs to assist him as surrogates and savants, including on quick-response work.

Recommendations

1. A new Office of National Assessments (ONA) should be formed in NFAC.

2. The Director of ONA should be essentially a manager, both wise in the fine tuning of a new system and tough-minded in matters of turf, space, grade points, and such.

3. ONA should contain a unitary staff of 30 to 40 analysts and unit managers with generous secretarial and RA assistance. Initially, line producers of military estimates should not be included in ONA.

4. A good part of the cadre should be on rotation from other offices. D/NFAC should make it clear that successful completion of such assignments will weigh heavily in promotions in home offices to senior analyst and division chief positions.

5. The ONA staff should be headed by a deputy office director, whose key function will be training the staff.

6. ONA should also contain a senior review group (SRG) of perhaps 12. Half of these should be serving NIOs; the others, accomplished critics of the substance and organization of papers.

7. The SRG should be headed by an ONA deputy director who is essentially a savant.

8. In order to save supergrade slots and promote NFAC support of ONA, the remaining NIOs should be deputy office directors and division chiefs in other NFAC offices. They should be given a special assistant for NIO work and perhaps an extra grade point (or larger bonus) as well.

9. ONA analysts should draft nearly all non-military estimates and IIMs; occasionally these should be drafted by analysts seconded from other offices.

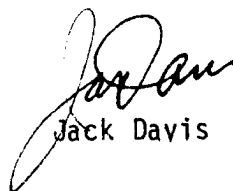
10. As a rule, requests from the DCI and key policy makers for NFAC assessments that are essentially analytical should be levied on ONA.

11. An NIO and two non-NIO members of the SRG should constitute a panel responsible for the review and defense of ONA staff drafts of interagency and NFAC assessments.

12. The Deputy Directors of ONA should be participating members of all panels.

13. The NIOs should have an advisory, rather than a leading, role in quick-response work, except when compelling DCI interests dictate otherwise.

14. Research projects should continue to be the responsibility of the existing offices, with the NIOs having only an advisory role.


Jack Davis

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